

**A PROCLAMATION TO BE SUBMITTED
BY LEGISLATORS GRANT, MAZUR, MILLS, HOGUES, MARINELLI,
LOUGHRAN, McCRACKEN, DIXON & LORIGO**

RE: Recognizing the Year 2012 as the U.N.'s International Year of Cooperatives and the 40th Anniversary of the Lexington Co-op

WHEREAS, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/136 on cooperatives in social development proclaims the year 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives; and

WHEREAS, in many areas, cooperatives promote the fullest possible participation in the economic and social development of people and are becoming a major factor in the economic and social development globally that contributes to the eradication of poverty; and

WHEREAS, Buffalo and Erie County have a rich history in the development of consumer, manufacturing, production, worker and housing Cooperatives in its diverse urban, suburban and rural communities, all of them embodying the principles of open membership, member democratic control, economic participation, autonomy, education, cooperation among co-ops and concern for community; and

WHEREAS, early area Cooperatives included the African-American Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society that established a co-op grocery store and credit union in 1939 -- the Society and store surviving until 1961; Spolka ("Cooperative") Men's Store; the Polish Cooperative Savings Bank; Cooperative Stove Works and the Cooperative Grange League that helped build our region's identity; and

WHEREAS, other early cooperative ventures have included Marine Drive, a Mitchell Lama Housing project, and numerous credit unions serving various ethnic, business and working communities; and

WHEREAS, a New Wave of co-ops in the 1970s included a babysitting co-op, three consumer food co-ops including North Buffalo, Allentown and Lexington; the non-profit Buffalo Cooperative FCU, the worker-managed Greenfield Street restaurant, Yeast-West Bakery, October Graphics and others, some of which were initially funded by grants from the UB Graduate Student Association; and

WHEREAS, the Lexington Co-op is celebrating its 40th anniversary with over 8,000 members-owners; the Buffalo Cooperative Federal Credit Union thrives and has approximately \$2.5 million out in local loans, and with other area credit unions, serves thousands of members; Nickel City Cooperative now maintains two cooperative residences; The Energy Co-op of America, founded in 1998, provides electric and gas to more than 7,500 members; and Urban Roots, the Upstate Farms Cooperative, Clinton-Bailey Farmers Market, the Eden and Amherst Cooperative Nursery Schools, True Value and the Eden Valley Growers, Inc., which are all growing; and

WHEREAS, our region continues to foster new co-ops, including the East Aurora Cooperative Market, the Farmer Pirates Cooperative and nascent organizations exploring cultural, arts, grocery, bakery, housing and other types of co-ops; and

WHEREAS, cooperatives are a form of community-based entrepreneurialism and a powerful economic model that keeps capital local, dates back to the Pilgrims and continues as a successful model today and for the future while providing local employment, local goods and local services to the community; and

WHEREAS, more than 29,000 cooperatives operate in the United States, generating two million jobs and making a substantial contribution to the US economy with annual sales of \$652 billion, as well as possessing assets of \$3 trillion.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that this Honorable Body recognize the vital role cooperatives play in the economic and social well-being of our city, region and nation join with local cooperatives and their members in enthusiastically supporting and locally celebrating the Year 2012 as the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives.